

[English]

Expansion of Bilateral Trade with Mauritius

820. SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to expand bilateral trade with Mauritius;

(b) if so, the areas identified for the expansion of bilateral trade between the two countries; and

(c) the details of the programmes drawn up in this regard for Eighth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) These areas include auto components, bicycle, and parts, toilet articles/cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, plastics, wheat/wheat/flour, books leather and leather products, household appliances travel goods, etc.

(c) No specific programme has been drawn up for Mauritius during the Eighth Five Year Plan. However, from time to time we take various steps like exchange of trade and official delegations, organisation of exclusive Indian exhibitions, participation in fairs in Mauritius, organisation of Buyer-Seller meets, etc. The same would be continued during the Eighth Five Year Plan also. Besides this, bilateral trade and cooperation are reviewed regularly under the auspices of Indo-Mauritius Joint Commission.

Trade with Sri Lanka

821. SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to boost trade with Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the areas identified in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken to implement the various proposals for expansion of trade between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c). It is the constant endeavour of the Government to increase bilateral trade between India and Sri Lanka. The first meeting of the Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission held in January, 1992 had emphasised the need for boosting bilateral trade and stepping up commercial exchanges between the two countries, besides identifying scope for joint ventures in agriculture, small scale industries and oil exploration.

Gold Abandoned by Smugglers

822. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to fish cut tonnes of gold abandoned by smugglers, believed to be piling up in India territorial waters;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether the Government have sought any foreign assistance in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (d). On the basis of reports received that the seaborne smugglers have been dumping contraband gold into the sea off the Indian coastline on fear of imminent interception by the Customs/Coast Guard, the Government has decided to de-